*187[*The questioner (Kumari Alia) was absent for answer vide col.* 37 infra]

*188. [*The questioners Shrimati Veena Verma and Shri Kapil Verma) were absent for answer* vide *cols.* 37—40 *infra*]

*189. [*The questioner (Shri Chaturanan Mishra)* was *absent for answere* vide *col.* 41 infra]

MR. CHAIRMAN. Question No. 190. Mr Bhandare.

Illegal feeling of trees at Bastar in Madhya Pradesh

*190. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that cases of illegal felling of trees in the tribal areas of Bastar in Madhya Pradesh are rampant; and

(b) if so what steps are proposed to be taken by Government to safeguard the trees there?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

(a) Government of Madhya Pradesh have reported that villagers of Bastar District have resorted to illegal felling of trees during the last one year, with a view to encroaching upon forest land. Naxalites are reported to be encouraging tribals in this respect. It is also reported that trees have been felled for collection of kosa silk cocoons.

(b) Steps taken by the State Government to safeguard the trees include:

(i) Registering of cases against the offenders under relevant provisions of Indian Forest Act, 1927.

(ii) Strengthening of Forest Protection Machinery in the District.

(iii) Seizing of timber illegally felled.

(iv) Not allowing encroaches to occupying the encroached areas.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Sir, it is a very wrong way of looking at these things when we say that these tribals cut the trees. I still remember the occasion when a 15-year old tribal student came to me and said, "Sir, we are the children of the forests and we never cut trees. We only prune them.". Sir, there was substance in what he said. Now, I want to ask the honourable Minister as to what they are going to do, what action they are going to take to preserve this culture of the tribals on account of which they get integrated with the trees and forests.

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Are you asking this question in general or with reference to Bastar?.. *(Interruptions)*... I just want to know whether your question is with reference to Bastar only or it is about the general thing, about the tribals in general.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: It is about Bastar specificially.

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Well, the State Government has informed us that it is not the tribals who are cuting the trees. There is a lot of Naxalite activity and the Naxalites are urging the villagers to cut the trees and encroach on the forest lands.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 191.

DR. ABRAR AHMED KHAN: Sir, Question No. 191.

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Sir, I am not getting the papers... *(Interruptions)*...I am really sorry, I am not able to locate it... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Sir, this should not be taken lightly... (*Interruptions*)...I do not know whether this is a case of another missing file... (*Interruptions*)... The Prime Minister's signature might be there on the file... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Sir, I am extremely sorry. I really did not expect this... (*Interruptions*)... If you want it, you can take it up next time... (*Interruptions*)... I will be ready next time... (*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Involvement of youth in National Reconstruction programmes

*183. SHRI SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are committed to involve the youth of the country in the national reconstruction programmes;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have taken any steps in this regard so far;

(d) if so, what are the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether Government are also committed to involve the youth in special schemes for employment and in their all-round development; and

(f) if so, what are the details thereof and the steps taken so far in that regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (f) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

The prgorammes are to raise awareness levels of our youth, inculcate knowledge and respect for the Constitution of India, democratic and secular values, promote the development of personality and character of youth, strengthening, awareness of our history and our rich diverse yet unified cultural heritage, promotion of national integration and the inculcation of the spirit of total unity, integrity and indivisibility of the country through National Integration camps, inter-state Youth visits, visits to and from border areas, involvement of youth in environmental enrichment and preservation, immunization, adult literacy and creation of community assets etc.

The Department of Youth Affairs and Sports have been implementing various youth programmes like National Service Scheme, Nehru Yuva Kendra Scheme, Promotion of National Integration, Assistance to Voluntary Organisations, Promotion of Adventure, Scouting and Guiding, National Service Volunteer Scheme, Exhibitions for Youth, Youth Hostels, Assistance to Youth Clubs, Training of Youth and National Youth Award to involve youth in national re-construction programmes. A national conference of youth leaders is being convened from 18th to 20th May, 1990 to chalk out a comprehensive National Youth Policy and programme of action to involve the youth in nation building activities.

Government is committed to encourage and promote vocational training, upgradation of skills and functional capabilities of youth through Schemes like Training of Youth and Assistance to Voluntary Organisations working in the field of youth. It is expected that the proposed National Conference of youth leaders will make further recommendations in this regard.